

Vermont Department of Public Safety - Vermont State Police
Synopses of internal investigations for the period of July 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021
Released July 19, 2022

Background: In an effort to further increase transparency in operations, beginning in January 2021 and continuing twice annually in approximately January and July, the Department of Public Safety and Vermont State Police, with the support of the independent State Police Advisory Commission, will begin releasing synopses of all internal investigations. These synopses will be compiled in six-month increments to balance timeliness with the need to have complete investigations and resolutions prior to release.

Notes:

- A. “Internally generated” indicates the complaint was made by a co-worker / employee of the Department. “Externally generated” indicates the complaint was made by someone outside the department, most often a member of the public involved in an event or investigation.
- B. Events marked with an A, B, C and so forth indicate there was either more than one employee involved, or multiple allegations against a single employee. Each case (A, B, C, etc.) has a separate finding or outcome.
- C. All investigations, details and outcomes are reviewed by the State Police Advisory Commission pursuant to its oversight role outlined in state statute.

	Total	Founded	Unfounded	Other
Internally Generated Cases	18	12	1	5
Externally Generated Cases	1	0	1	0

1. (A and B) Internally generated – July 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper engaged in two motor vehicle pursuits, each in violation of the Vermont State Police pursuit policy. Investigation revealed that the trooper failed to adhere to specific policy standards regulating motor vehicle pursuits.

Outcome: Finding of a policy violation for “Violation of Rules.” Trooper was counseled.

2. Internally generated – July 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into a trooper’s self-reported, unintended discharge of their firearm. Investigation unable to determine whether trooper’s actions or mechanical defect caused the discharge.

Outcome: Finding that no policies were violated.

3. (A, and B) Internally generated – August 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that troopers, while at the barracks, failed to check on a person in their custody within the policy-required timeframe. Investigation revealed that the troopers failed to adhere to Vermont State Police policy specifics regarding how often to check on persons in their custody.

Outcome: Finding of a policy violation for “Violation of Rules.” Troopers were each issued a Letter of Reprimand and required to complete additional training.

4. (A, B and C) Internally generated – August 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that three troopers possessed fraudulently made COVID-19 vaccination cards. Criminal investigations undertaken.

Outcome: All three members resigned before the completed investigations could be reviewed and adjudicated by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety.

5. Internally generated – September 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper used excessive force after taking a subject into custody.

Outcome: The member resigned before the completed investigation could be reviewed and adjudicated by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety.

6. Externally generated – October 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper inappropriately released information during a background check. Investigation revealed that the release of information was appropriate.

Outcome: Finding that no policies were violated.

7. Internally generated – November 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that a trooper experienced a negligent accidental discharge of their firearm. Investigation revealed that a trooper experienced a negligent accidental discharge of their firearm while attending firearms training.

Outcome: Finding of “Negligent Discharges of Firearms.” Employee disciplined for violating this policy – Letter of Reprimand.

8. (A and B) Internally generated – November 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that troopers engaged in a romantic relationship without informing their chain of command. Investigation revealed that the members failed to adhere to specific requirements of the Vermont State Police “Non-fraternization” policy.

Outcome: One member resigned before the completed investigation could be reviewed and adjudicated by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. Finding for the other member of “Violation of Rules.” Employee disciplined for violating this policy – Letter of Reprimand.

9. (A, B and C) Internally generated – December 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into allegations that a member sexually harassed three other members. Investigation revealed that the member violated multiple Vermont State Police policies.

Outcome: Findings of policy violations for “Discrimination,” “Conduct,” and “Violation of Rules.” Member disciplined – Employment terminated.

10. (A, B and C) Internally generated – December 2021

Synopsis: Inquiry into an allegation that two troopers engaged in a motor vehicle pursuit in violation of the Vermont State Police pursuit policy, and that a supervisor failed to order an end to the pursuit in a timely manner. Investigation revealed that all three members failed to adhere to policy specifics regulating motor vehicle pursuits.

Outcome: Finding of a policy violation for, “Violation of Rules.” All three members disciplined – Letters of Reprimand.